

List of Claims:

1. (Currently amended) A nonwoven fibrous mat comprised of polymer fibers bound by about 5-30 wt. percent, based on the dry weight of the mat, of a formaldehyde containing polymer resin latex binder providing a hot strength in the mat, at 200 degrees C., of no more than about 1 percent elongation, in the machine direction, the resin containing at least about 2.5 wt. percent and up to about 7.5 wt. percent of a bisulfite compound, based on the dry weight of the formaldehyde containing resin in the binder.
2. (Previously presented) The mat of claim 1 wherein the resin is selected from the group consisting of formaldehyde fortified latex polymers which may be composed of ethylene-vinyl acetate copolymer, styrene-acrylic copolymer, vinyl-acrylic copolymer, styrene-butadiene-acrylonitrile copolymer, or acrylic copolymer.
3. (Previously presented) The mat of claim 2 wherein the bisulfite is ammonium bisulfite.
4. (Previously presented) The mat of claim 1 wherein the bisulfite is ammonium bisulfite.
5. (Previously presented) The mat of claim 1 wherein the bisulfite compound is present in an amount of at least about 5 wt. percent.
6. (Previously presented) The mat of claim 2 wherein the bisulfite compound is present in an amount of at least about 5 wt. percent.
7. (Previously presented) The mat of claim 3 wherein the bisulfite compound is present in an amount of at least about 5 wt. percent.
8. (Previously presented) The mat of claim 1 wherein the binder is an emulsified styrene butadiene acrylonitrile copolymer latex.
9. (Previously presented) The mat of claim 2 wherein the binder is an emulsified styrene butadiene acrylonitrile copolymer latex.

10. (Previously presented) The mat of claim 3 wherein the binder is an emulsified styrene butadiene acrylonitrile copolymer latex.

11. (Previously presented) The mat of claim 8 wherein the polymer fibers are polyester, the bisulfite compound is ammonium bisulfite, the binder content of the web is in the range of about 16-24 wt. percent and the basis weight of the web is in the range of about 150-200 gms/sq. meter.

12. (Previously presented) The mat of claim 9 wherein the polymer fibers are polyester, the bisulfite compound is ammonium bisulfite, the binder content of the web is in the range of about 16-24 wt. percent and the basis weight of the web in the range of about 150-200 gms/sq. meter.

13. (Previously presented) The mat of claim 5 wherein the polymer fibers are polyester, the bisulfite compound is ammonium bisulfite, the binder content of the web is in the range of about 16-24 wt. percent and the basis weight of the web is in the range of about 150-200 gms/sq. meter.

14 - 19. (Cancelled)